

HISTORIC STONWARE POTTERIES IN MANCHESTER, ADAMS COUNTY, OHIO

by
James L. Murphy
Grove City, Ohio

Introduction

Known historic potteries in Adams Co., Ohio, are confined to the Ohio River village of Manchester, where the earliest was an unknown potter who was working as early as 1820, producing \$400 worth of lead-glazed crockery ware annually. Because rock outcrops in the county are confined to the Ordovician and Silurian systems, which do not provide good clays for pottery production, the 1820 pottery may have used surface clays to produce its crockery, which undoubtedly was low-fired redware, but no examples of these wares are known. By 1850, the transportation facilities provided by the adjacent Ohio River permitted good stoneware clays to be obtained economically from mines in the Pennsylvanian strata of Ohio and Kentucky, and also allowed profitable shipping of the finished products downstream to Cincinnati and other markets.

Walking along the Ohio River bank below Front St. in Manchester, one finds the boat ramp into the Ohio literally paved with stoneware sherds, and careful search reveals sherds impressed with the mark of "A. Means" (Fig. 1).

History

Archibald Means' pottery is listed on Front St. in the 1870 Products of Industry schedule, producing 5,000 gallons of stoneware a year. Means was 37 years old at the time with wife Sarah and two young sons, William and Archibald, Jr., \$10,000 of real estate, and \$21,500 of property. By 1880 he had moved to Peru, Illinois, and was no longer engaged in potting, working instead as a manager in a zinc manufacturing company. Only a few rare pieces of marked A. Means Manchester pottery are known (Figs. 2, 3).

The earliest well-documented stoneware pottery in Manchester was begun by John Parkes and Barney Chamberlain in May, 1846. Chamberlain retired after potting for 22 years and the company then apparently became Parkes & Co. Chamberlain, born in Virginia, is listed in the 1850 census as 65 years old and a retired stoneware manufacturer. The 1870 census of manufacturers indicates that the pottery was located at the corner of Fifth and Washington, produced 36,000 gallons of stoneware a year, and employed thirteen workers. The 1850 census suggests that two early workers were 22 year old William Vaughn, who hailed from Virginia but had lived in Ohio for at least nine years, and John Hill, a 26 year old Irishman.

The latest reference to the Parkes pottery is the 1880 census of manufacturers, which indicates that the firm was producing "all

kinds of stoneware, fruit jars, and stone pipe," the stone pipe probably being pipe for water or sewer lines or drainage tile. There is a small Albany slip glazed presentation jug signed on the bottom in script: Charles C. Parkes/ Manchester/ Ohio/ Sept 13 1878 and given to Miss Lucy J. White, Portsmouth, Ohio, which is suggestive of the importance of river traffic to the pottery (Fig. 4, 5). It also indicates that John Parkes' son was working in the pottery at the age of 16. He was still working there in 1880. Pieces marked Parkes & Co. (Figs. 6, 7) are even more rare than Means pottery.

By 1883 the firm had become Bates, Sibley & Co., consisting of A.B. Bates, Charles S. and John Tolle. The June, 1885, Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows this pottery owned by A.B. Bates & Co., and the 1886 Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows the pottery at the same location as the former Parkes pottery. The Bates, Sibley, and Tolle firm included Vermont-born Charles Sibley, whose sons Frank N., Herbert, and Edward probably also worked there, and John F. Tolle, born in Kentucky but potting in Manchester from at least 1870 to 1880. Bates himself does not appear to have been a potter, however. By 1904 the Sanborn insurance maps indicate that the pottery at this site was known as the Manchester Pottery Co. And by 1912 the pottery was gone. There are no known examples of Manchester stoneware with any of these names.

By 1883 Charles C. Parkes had become the junior member of Weaver & Parkes, indicating a different pottery in Manchester. Although its exact location has not been determined, it is logical to assume that it was on the site of the old Means pottery. Archaeological testing might determine this. Three years later, Weaver and Parkes had become Weaver and Bradford, employing four men, and it was still listed in the 1888/89 Ohio State Directory. In 1890, A.J. Weaver was listed by himself. No information is available on Bradford. It is not certain when Charles Parkes left the firm but by 1900 he was a hardware salesman in Hillsboro.

As for Andrew Jackson Weaver, he was a member of a large family of potters with Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and Tennessee roots. First appearing in Manchester in the 1870 census, Andrew was the 17 year old son of George Weaver, also a potter. George, Sr., was born in Pennsylvania in 1809, probably at Johnstown, where his father, Henry J. Weaver, was a potter; but George, Jr. (Andrew's brother) was born in Kentucky. Charles H. Faulkner (1981) has excavated a pottery in Knoxville, Tennessee, that was operated by David H.,

another son of George Weaver, and has provided considerable information on the Weaver family. George C. Weaver (b. 1809) and father Henry J., moved to Catlettsburg, Kentucky, about 1839, although in 1850 the family was in Perry Twp., Lawrence Co. 1860 found them in Catlettsburg and 1870 in Manchester. Andrews' brothers David H., George W., and William H. all potted in Knoxville, Tennessee (Faulkner 1981). Unfortunately, there are no known pieces of Manchester stoneware with the marks Weaver, Weaver & Parkes, or Weaver & Bradford. Andrew J. Weaver appears to have been potting in Manchester as late as 1890, but by 1900 the widowed Andrew, his daughter and two grand-daughters had joined his brother William at Paris, Henry Co., Tennessee, where William had built a pottery around 1894 (Smith 1979: 114). This pottery was out of business by 1908 (*Ibid*: 115), and Andrew turned to general farming.

Archaeological Considerations

While part of the history of these various Manchester potteries might be elucidated by deed and probate records, archaeological testing could also provide considerable information. What amounts to archaeological pedestrian survey along the Manchester "waterfront" has located the site of the landing from which Archibald Means loaded his stoneware onto river boats. Further study might determine whether this was also the site of the various potteries associated with Andrew Jackson Weaver, as seems likely.

Both the Parkes and the Means potteries are indicated on a crude panoramic view of Manchester appearing in Caldwell's 1880 atlas but provide little information about the structures. Survey of the small amount of ground visible in the vicinity of the Parkes pottery site did not reveal any stoneware waster material, but survey conditions were very poor.

References

- Caldwell, J. A.
1880 *Caldwell's Illustrated Historical Atlas...of Adams, County, Ohio, 1797-1880*. J.A. Caldwell, Newark, Ohio.
Faulkner, Charles H.
1981 *The Weaver Pottery Site: Industrial Archaeology in Knoxville, Tennessee*. Tennessee Dept. of Transportation Project #29001-1219-04. University of Tennessee, Dept. of Archaeology, Knoxville.
Smith, Samuel D., and Stephen T. Rogers
1979 *A Survey of Historic Pottery Making in Tennessee*. Research Series No. 3, Tennessee Dept. of Conservation, Division of Archaeology, Nashville.

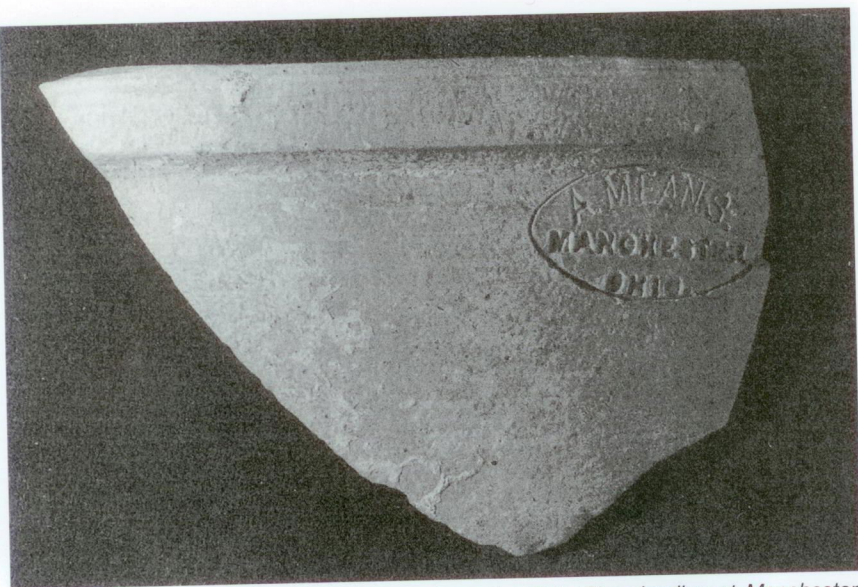


Figure 1. (Murphy) Stoneware sherd from along the Ohio River landing at Manchester, Adams Co., Ohio. Impressed cartouche reads "A. MEANS MANCHESTER OHIO".

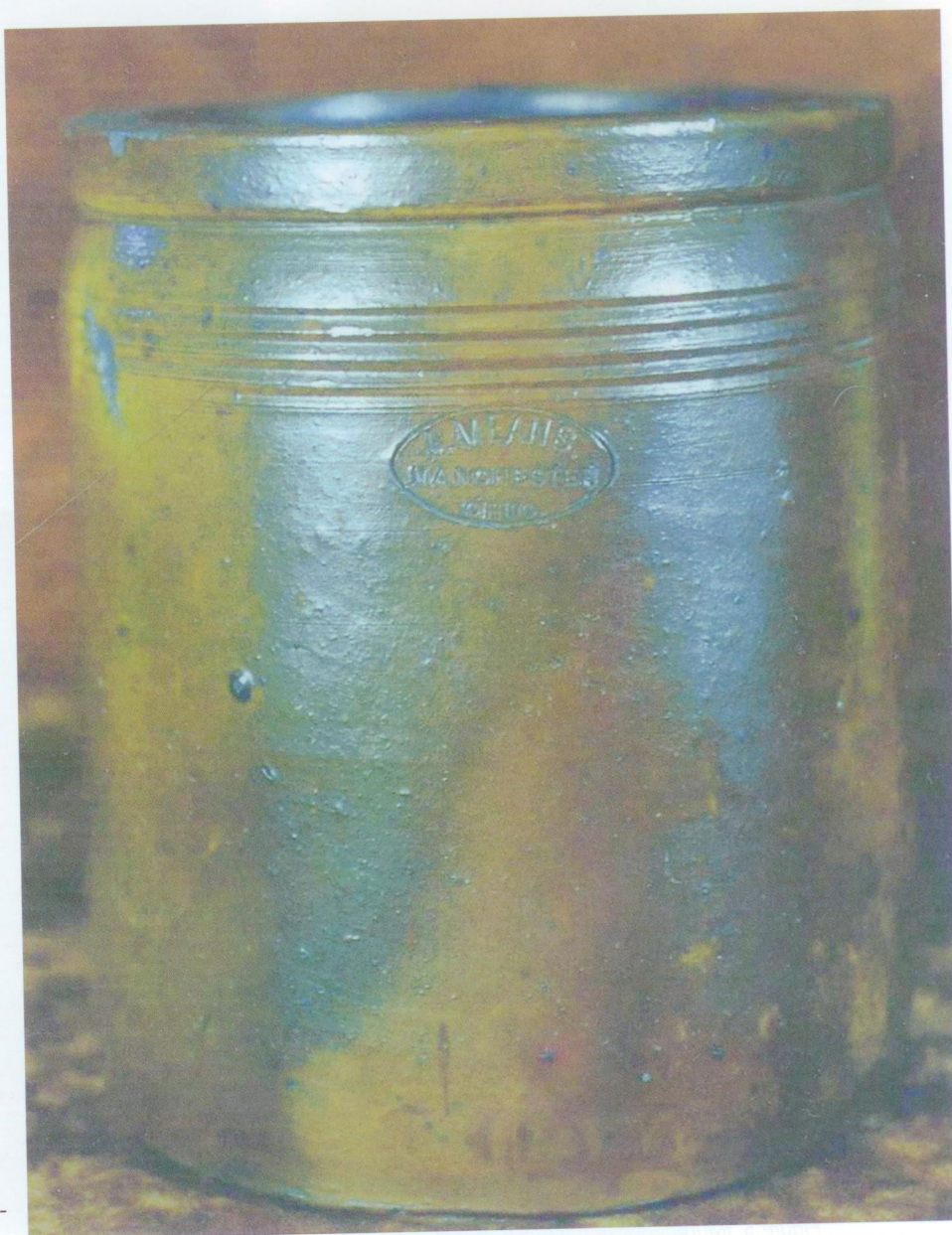


Figure 2. (Murphy) Small Albany slip decorated crock made by Archibald Means.



Figure 3. (Murphy) Three gallon jug with A. Means Manchester cartouche.



Figure 4. (Murphy) Small novelty jug ca. 4 inches high with sgraffito script "Miss L.J. White, Portsmouth, Ohio".

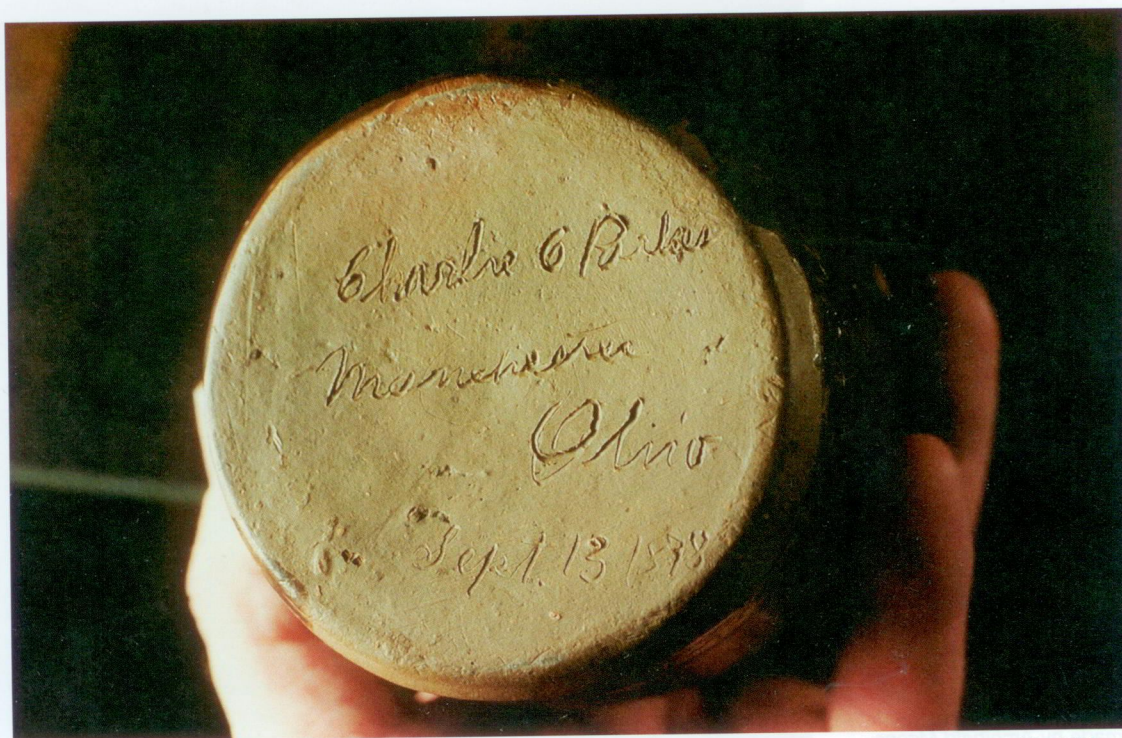


Figure 5. (Murphy) Base of Lucy J. White miniature jug incised "Charles Parkes, Manchester, Ohio, Sept. 13, 1878."

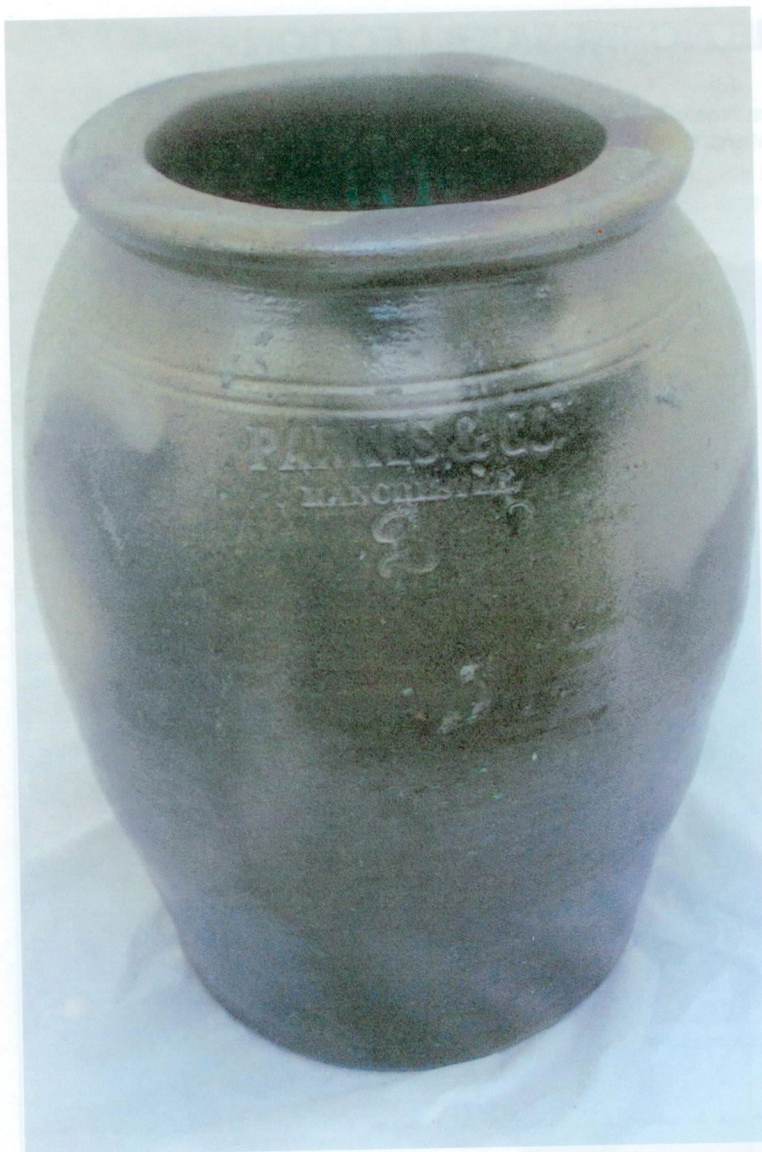


Figure 6. (Murphy) Two gallon crock
impressed "Parkes & Co. Manchester, O."



Figure 7. (Murphy)
Impressed mark on Parkes &
Co. Manchester crock.